



Communication Studies (CMNS) 201

Introduction to Mass Media (Revision 5)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the **course listing** [↗](#) for the current revision **ⓧ**

Delivery mode: Individualized study online [↗](#) with eText [↗](#)

Credits: 3

Areas of study: Arts or Social Science

Prerequisites: None

Precluded: None

Challenge: CMNS 201 has a challenge for credit option.

Faculty: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences [↗](#)

Overview

This course provides an introduction to key topics, debates, issues, and theoretical approaches in Communication Studies. In this course, we explore questions of communication and map the contours of the field. We particularly examine the role the mass media play in society and the ways they are shaped by politico-economic and socio-cultural factors. Topics include how media policies, trends in ownership, production practices, and audiences impact our mediascape, with a focus on the Canadian context. We pay particular attention to how digital media practices are impacting these approaches, debates, and issues.

Objectives

- To gain an overview of the key topics, debates, and issues in communication studies and map the contours of Communication Studies
- To examine the role that communication and mass media play in society, with a particular focus on the Canadian context
- To critically analyze media practices and media uses in our daily lives
- To improve the ability to convey ideas through structured written assignments

Outline

- Unit 1: Defining Communication
- Unit 2: Defining Mass Media
- Unit 3: Media Audiences
- Unit 4: Media Policy
- Unit 5: Critical Approaches and the Political Economy of Media

- Unit 6: Cultural Studies and Media Representation
- Unit 7: Digital Media and the Internet
- Unit 8: Social Media

Evaluation


To **receive credit** [↗](#) for CMNS 201, you must pass each assignment and the final examination with a minimum grade of 50%. The weighting of the composite mark is as follows:

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: Media Log and Blog	15%
Assignment 2: Midterm Readings Exercise	20%
Assignment 3: Synthesis Paper	25%
Assignment 4: Reflective Blog	10%
Final Examination	30%
Total	100%



The **final examination** for this course must be taken online with an AU-approved exam invigilator at an approved invigilation centre. It is your responsibility to ensure your chosen invigilation centre can accommodate online exams. For a list of invigilators who can accommodate online exams, visit the **Exam Invigilation Network** [↗](#) .

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's **online Calendar** [↗](#) .

Materials

Shade, L. R. (2014). *Mediascapes: New patterns in Canadian communication* (4th ed.). Toronto, ON: Nelson Education. 
(eText)

eText

Registration in this course includes an electronic textbook. For more information on **electronic textbooks** , please refer to our **eText Initiative site** .

Other Materials

The course materials also include an online Study Guide, Course Information, and AU Student Manual. All other reading materials for the course are available online through the Digital Reading Room.

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit**  can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation





To **receive credit**  for the CMNS 201 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least **D (50 percent)**  on the examination.

Activity	Weight
Take home assignment	50%
Exam	50%
Total	100%



Challenge for credit course registration form

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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